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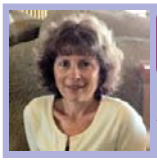

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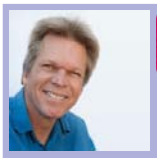

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Sharing a Musical Vision of Humanity

An Interview with Ruth Pelham

conducted by Sally Rogers

Ruth sings at the 2011 CMN conference. *(photo by Diane Lansing)*

Ruth Pelham is the 2014 recipient of CMN's Magic Penny Award. Ruth is one of the founding members of our organization and served on the CMN board for many years. She is a singer, songwriter, a performer, an educator, conference presenter, workshop leader, and much more.

Ruth grew up in a singing family of four. She spent her summers at camps where counselors shared inspiring songs of political activism. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin in Madison where she began writing songs and performing for audiences whom she taught to sing out in full voice about issues of equality and justice. She didn't coin the term zipper song*, but she certainly became the master of it with the likes of "Under One Sky," "Look to the People," "What Do I Do?," and so many more, all of which are sung across the nation in schools and at festivals and rallies.*

To read more about Ruth's work, read Phil Hoose's 1997 interview in the Winter 1997 issue of PIO! *found in the members section of the CMN website.*

PIO!: Ruth, in 1997 Phil Hoose recorded a wonderful interview with you giving many details of your background and history with the Music Mobile. But now it's seventeen years later, and Music Mobile is thirty-seven years old. You are, of course, that much wiser as well. How has the organization grown and changed both you and the community during these passing years?

RP: Music Mobile's been a major vehicle that's pushed me to grow. When I started it in 1977, I'd never written a grant or been responsible for running a not-for-profit organization. I had to relate to all kinds of people, from the city workers (who maintained the Music Mobile van and cut wood into sticks for our instruments) to the bankers, newspaper reporters, city officials, and, most of all, the people in the neighborhoods who came to the programs. I was shy, lacked confidence, and didn't really have a clue about my own strengths. But I believed in my vision, and that compelled me to keep going. Now, because of all of the challenges I've faced—and succeeded or failed at—I'm stronger, and more confident, and way more skilled in many areas than I could have ever imagined.

PIO!: Say more about that for you and for the community.

RP: For me, there's been so much continuity amidst lots of change. What's a constant is the push and pull of having to choose between my local organizing work through the Music Mobile and putting time and attention to my career as an educator and songwriter on a national and international level. Sometimes those two paths have been completely compatible and other times it's like choosing between two treasures I adore. And that's true for so many of us who are driven by multiple interests and the urge to make a difference in multiple ways.

PIO!: You've made a difference for tens of thousands of people around Albany and surely in other places, too. But especially in Albany, you and Music Mobile are part of the fabric of life, like the Pied Piper who never goes away.

RP: Yes, people often liken Music Mobile to the ice cream truck. But we don't sell ice cream. We give away love. Truly. That happens by setting up situations for people to actively care and pay attention to each other in loving ways, by singing, laughing, figuring things out together, helping, and recognizing common needs. Interaction is a constant at our programs and it also happens when I drive down a street with the Music Mobile song playing from the van. People turn their heads, wave and smile, and sing along because they remember the song and associate it with a special part of their childhood. Neighbors sing spontaneously with neighbors. And that makes my heart sing. Music Mobile has given people a common focal point. It's like the common beat of a shared heart.

The Music Mobile is a familiar sight in Albany neighborhoods. *(photo by Amy Conley)*

PIO!: What's an example of the coming together you're talking about?

RP: Oh, there are so many, but a very recent one stands out. I was in a pizza place collecting tomato cans for the kids to build bongo drums from. The store owner and the manager told me they were best friends from childhood, and that they'd come to Music Mobile as kids. Then one by one they began to sing the Music Mobile song, each one adding their favorite lines as best as they could remember. Then in walked a young couple and they both squealed, "Oh, you're the Music Mobile lady! I came as a kid!" But neither of them knew that the other one had been to Music Mobile! From their reaction, it was a big deal. We laughed and hugged and reminisced and then the five of us carried the cans to my car. Well, getting out of his car was a guy in a pickup truck who looked very familiar to me. It turned out he's the city carpenter who had cut my wood a few months before, but I didn't recognize him out of context. Turns out that he had come to Music Mobile as a kid! So all of us stood around singing the Music Mobile song right there in front of the pizza place. Here they were, mostly strangers to each other, but I tell you, it was like a family reunion.

PIO!: Through the years your work has taken you far beyond Albany. I noticed on your website the international outreach portion of your work. What is the common thread that runs through those experiences?

RP: Wherever I go, children and adults join me to sing along. It's always a challenge given that I don't know the language of the country I'm visiting. But

what happens is that someone from the country speaks English, and translates the words and what I'm saying in between the songs. That happened when I went to the Soviet Union in 1986 and also in Sri Lanka when I was there after the tsunami. This February I was in Uganda as part of a project that takes wonderful care of fourteen street boys by raising enough money for their food and housing and schooling. Ronnie Sseruyange, the coordinator of that project, and I set up a Skype session between second graders in Albany and his Ugandan kids. The Music Mobile staff taught the second graders several songs in the Ugandan language and the Ugandan staff taught their kids songs in English. And when the Skype session happened, the two sets of kids sang the songs together and talked to each other through a translator. How hopeful it was to see two groups become one, half a world away.

PIO!: So many of your songs are upbeat and paint a world where love, hope, kindness—those kinds of human qualities—are predominant. Where in you does that come from?

RP: For sure, I'm not naïve, and I know in every fiber of my being that life can be truly awful. So often I'm deeply troubled by what I see in the world, at home on the streets of Albany, what I hear on the news, what's going on behind the closed doors not only of families but of the global institutions of finance and power. And what I see inside myself, too. Conflicts. Contradictions. Ways of being that sometimes are not the best person I want to be. And communities that are not the best they can be. But something happens to me deep down when I write songs and do my programs. It happens during conversations with strangers. I love that! Something wells up in me that knows we are basically good and that we can all do a whole lot better were it not for greed, poverty, ego, and lack of time and focus to live in a more connected and gentle way toward each other.

PIO!: Given the scope of your work and the passion of your vision, have you ever thought of expanding Music Mobile, its personnel and its programming?

RP: That's a good question. Now that I'm sixty-five, many questions about the future come up daily, as is natural at this stage of life. Yes, I want the body of my work—the songs, the pedagogy, the community organizing part of MM, the connection to social work, recreation, education, and youth development—to continue. I want to bring this resource to a wide group of people who can apply it creatively according to how they want to do it. Not necessarily to have people go out into the communities in a van. Maybe that would happen, and that would be great. But to take the essence of my work and have its many elements be tools for people to use to accomplish their own purposes for bringing goodness to the world.

I have staff members at MM who have been with me for many years. One of them is Lavon Watson. He came to MM when he was five. He's now thirty. Lavon takes a very major role in the programs. He leads songs and activities, and really has down what MM is all about. During the summers we've had other staff and Americorps volunteers who have come back several years in a row. Additional administrative staff come and go as funding is available. Most of our funding comes from grants, fee-for-service contracts, individual and business contributions, and in-kind services. We have to do this fundraising, even though it takes a huge amount of effort and time, because most of our programs are free to participants. We also have a hard working board of directors who, like so many of us, are devoted to peace and justice values.

PIO!: A big part of MM's focus is on building self-esteem and

leadership skills.

RP: Yes, a big part of MM is giving people the opportunity to be leaders, to be seen. I love to give the example of an incident that happened in the '90s. We were at a park loading up the van after finishing a program that had been going on for a good hour and a half. There were still at least twelve kids hanging around helping us when a little boy came up with a dead bug in his hands. Of course the reaction from the kids was, "Ee-ooo! Gross." The kids looked at him like he was weird. When I saw that, I went inside myself, and thought, "These kids need to learn that bugs are wonderful, a part of life right in their neighborhood, so they don't squash them," as is the lesson in Phil and Hannah Hoose's book *Hey Little Ant.* The other thing that I wanted was for the boy who had gotten looked at in the weird way to be seen by the kids in a different way: as smart and capable and as a leader. So I asked him and the other kids to come make a circle. We spent a good half hour with the bug. It became a lesson about death and dying, about what is different and what is the same about the bug and about people. It was a lesson about the relationship and the commonality between people and the life around us, whether it's a tree or an insect or a flower. In cities, a lot of kids don't get that, period.

The music piece came in at the very end, after we buried the bug. The kids decided that the boy who had brought the bug over would be the one to put the bug in the hole they dug together, collectively, cooperatively with a stick. It was all about problem solving. How do we bury the bug? Well, we have to dig a hole. Well, how do you dig a hole? You have to do it with a shovel. But we don't have a shovel. What's like a shovel? Guess we'd better go get a stick. So it was a whole process of discovering how to make things work in the world of a neighborhood.

At the very end of this, the kids said, "Now we have to write a song!" I was ready to leave, but I couldn't leave, because they really wanted to write the song. So we wrote a song and it went:

> Goodbye, bug, we're sorry you're gone.
> You are a good bug, and we'll miss you
> Flying in the air, crawling on the ground.
> We'll remember you forever at Colby Park.
> We'll miss you. Yes, we love you.

After we finished writing the song and singing it together, again I thought I was leaving. But they said, "No, you need to record that!"

So I agreed and we recorded it. I was leaving and they said, "No, no, no! Now we have to play it driving around in the MM van when you drive out of our neighborhood."

And that's exactly what we did. They showed such pride and power, understanding that they had just done something really transformative for everyone, even for the bug. I was greatly moved by their urgency to share their experience with their neighborhood through their song. That's some of the hard work of Music Mobile. You decide the programs are an hour, but you are there for two hours because something spontaneously happens. That's one reason Music Mobile street programs have worked, because I've allowed them to spill over, which is very different than when you work in a school. You have one hour, you finish, and you're gone.

PIO!: Yes, there's very little time in school for reflection and application of what you learn.

RP: There's a freedom on the street to allow structures to evolve organically out of the needs of the people and purposes of the program. That's a concept that I always teach when I teach college students or do adult workshops and want them to appreciate the power of spontaneity and flexibility.

PIO!: There must be a great deal of spontaneity when you drive around the neighborhoods in the van. Where did your idea for the music van come from?

RP: I guess I originally modeled the Music Mobile after the ice cream truck. It's a concept that makes so much sense, to take the music to where the people are. It's been a really powerful organizing tool to just go out on a street corner or into a park rather than people having to have money or transportation to go across town.

PIO!: Frankly, I'm surprised that among CMNers, or other people in your circle, someone hasn't come to you and said, "Hey, Ruth, can I build a program where I live modeled after MM? Has that ever happened? If not, I suspect a lot of people think, "I could never do it like Ruth does it."

RP: That's been one of the questions all along—can Music Mobile exist without Ruth? Is it my personality, my style? I think it's a combination of both and so much more. I think some of the foundation of MM is so logical and obvious in a way. I believe it's very replicable.

What I'm hoping, now that I've spent thirty-seven years doing this work in schools, neighborhoods and parks, libraries and playgrounds, is that I'd like to do some shifting of where I put my attention, so I can bring MM to another level.

What I've seen from my staff through the years is that they learn from me and then present the songs and activities using their own styles and personalities. In terms of the lessons and music, oh yes, they can surely be replicated. But what I haven't seen is people going out in a van gathering neighbors. And I have to tell you, it takes a tremendous amount of work on many, many levels to do that. You have to build up a relationship of trust with the people in the neighborhoods that you're inviting to come to the programs. That takes a way of relating to people that is at the core honest, patient, being good at listening to people and understanding them beyond what their words are saying. So if someone says, "No, I don't want to go to the Music Mobile program," you have to dig a little deeper to find out why. Ask, for example, "Would it help to have a friend come with you?" You have to coax people. Sincerity and humor work well. You have to ask what's keeping them from deciding to come and what would make it possible to join in. On days when it's really hot out and we've been driving around for a half hour and the kids still don't come out of their homes, we have to keep going anyway because we know there are people in the houses. And the point is for them to come out of their houses, get away from their techno toys, and engage with their neighbors by singing and doing creative and fun things together.

PIO!: Yes, asking and listening to people to find out what they need rather than presenting what you *think* they need is an important lesson. Ruth, you were one of CMN's founders. How has CMN changed and grown since its inception and what are your hopes for the organization?

When CMN began, our roots were grounded in peace and social justice

because so many of us had been in college in the sixties. Much of what is taught in schools today as almost status quo was quite radical in the early CMN days, like teaching about peace and recycling. I would hope that CMN always is true to those roots and at the same time can embrace the fact that we don't all have the same belief systems. We don't have all of the same political viewpoints. But we all have a similar love for children, and that drives much of our shared values and vision of the kind of world we want. Just as was true back when we founded CMN, we still need to come up with ways to flip racism and greed and homophobia and all of those "-isms." The power of oppression and injustice is strong as steel, and that's why it matters so much what we sing and teach about. The world has to change, and we are truly among the movers and shakers to do that.

PIO!: Your songs are among the classics of children's music and are part of the national folk music song bag. What is your hope for how your songs can be used to further the values that you hold so dear?

RP: Thanks for recognizing my songs in that way! What I hope is that the vision of humanity that's infused in the lyrics and spirit of my songs will give people strength and inspiration to carry us on to a better world. I write my songs so they can be easily sung and, because of that, be passed along from group to group and generation to generation. My songs are a means of creating circles of hope, circles of inclusion. It's from people singing together that ripples of change will heal the world, and I'm so grateful to be one of our voices.

In Memory of Faith Petric

September 13, 1915–October 24, 2013

by Nancy Schimmel

Faith Petric at the 2003 CMN Conference in LA *(photo by Sally Rogers)*

Faith Petric's ambition as a child was to learn all the songs there are. She learned a lot of them. And Faith knew how to put a song across, especially the funny ones, where timing is as important as rhythm. She sang every kind of song: traditional and recently written, songs for kids and songs for grown-ups, political songs and silly songs. She was often introduced as the Fort Knox of Folk Music. For *Sing Out!* magazine, she selected parodies for her column, *The Folk Process*, so singers from all over could air their pet peeves and epiphanies. She put out a number of albums to share the songs she gathered, including one of children's songs on the A Gentle Wind label, but people singing together, live, was her special pleasure.

The San Francisco Folk Music Club met at Faith's for decades, and so did the Freedom Song Network, of which Faith was a cofounder in 1982. FSN is a West Coast sister of PMN (People's Music Network), the mostly East Coast organization from which the Children's Music Network sprang.

Faith was such a lynchpin of the Bay Area folk community you would think she had always lived there, but actually she started out as a small-town Idaho preacher's kid. She just made a small town of her own in the middle of San Francisco.

In their blog, Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer recalled a story:

> Faith told us that the Philadelphia Folk Festival hired her to perform in schools in Philly's inner city. They sent her to the toughest school, where she found herself in a classroom of rough kids from the African American "hood" who assumed this little ole white lady was a joke. She looked them in the eye, started talking about being born in a log cabin, and captivated them for the next forty-five minutes.
>
> Faith understood the necessity for music in the movement—she had marched for civil rights in Selma and sung on many a picket line. Estelle Freedman interviewed Faith and wrote a song-biography of her, "She Was There," that covers her roots and her activism well. I didn't know she'd gone east during World War II to build Liberty Ships and, in her off hours, got to know Josh White and Leadbelly. Estelle sang the song at Faith's ninety-fifth birthday concert in 2010 at the Freight and Salvage in Berkley,

California. You can see the performance, and Faith introducing it, on YouTube.

Faith had a big house and an easy hospitality that made 885 Clayton Street the center of the Bay Area folk community for years. The first time I remember talking to Faith was in 1957, just after I'd graduated from Cal. I know the date because that was my year of exile from the Bay Area. I was living in Sacramento and coming down to Berkeley every other weekend for some cool—both literal and figurative. I ran into Faith at some event, and she invited us to stay at her house anytime. Well, we always stayed with my folks, but the thing is, that was not just one of those "Oh, you must come over sometime" invitations. She meant it and we knew it.

Faith had a daughter to raise, so she didn't quit her day job till she was fifty-five. She and her singing friends took to the road in a bus, and the Portable Folk Festival was born, with Faith and various combinations of performers traveling around the country and astounding the populace.

I think Faith's log cabin, hymn-singing roots gave her the perspective that made her such a good performer for Chautauqua, bringing old-time vaudeville entertainment to towns too small to have a regular music venue. She did that for twenty years.

Faith traveled across the pond as well. Visiting her daughter in Ireland, she made the rounds of the pubs and clubs and made connections between the folkies of the British Isles and the Bay Area. She made easy connections between the East and West Coasts, between singers and vaudeville performers, between performers for adults and performers for children.

At ninety-four, Faith Petric was the very first recipient of the Folk Alliance Region West's Best of the West Lifetime Achievement Award. Her ninety-fifth birthday celebration was a vaudeville show at the Freight with jugglers, singers, and bubble-blowers, and Faith right at home in the middle of it all.

A whole lot of people in a whole lot of places are missing Faith right now—her sense of humor, her sense of fun, and her encyclopedic knowledge of folk music and the people who make it. She spent her last days at Coming Home Hospice in San Francisco's Castro district, listening to her friends sing to her, introducing her visitors to each other as she always did. She died there last October 24 at ninety-eight, her daughter with her and her granddaughter on the phone.

Here's a link to her daughter Carole Craig's blog about the process of Faith's dying and Carole's coping.

Music—the Universal Language

by Maureen Conlin

(photos courtesy of Stephen Michael Schwartz)

Music is the universal language that embraces children of all nationalities and cultures and encourages young children and their parents to melt away boundaries as children embark on a journey to discover their own inner musicians.

"The melody communicates one thing, the words another, and adding movement to a song provides the thread that binds it all together," says Stephen Michael Schwartz, a children's artist who has been sharing his gift of song and music with audiences for more than thirty years.

This gift has guided Stephen on a journey across the world where he finds environments may change, but parents, anywhere he travels, all want the same thing for their children. Music brings joy, laughter, and song into children's hearts and they are able to get caught up in that music as they hear familiar notes or melodies. Stephen, best known as a member of the popular children's group Parachute Express, is currently performing solo in more than sixty shows in thirty cities across China, utilizing children's music to break down barriers.

Stephen encourages educators and performers of children's music to sing with the children, not at them, and to guide the children to the music as well as to connect visually through familiar movements and actions. Music provides the opportunity for an artist to create a dialogue between children and parents of all different cultures through the song being sung or performed.

An example of this is one of Stephen's best-loved songs, "When I Build My House," in which he uses sequencing to provide children with the structure to follow along even though they may not know the lyrics or the language. Working forward and then backward with that sequencing provides a technique for memory and movement. "When I Build My House" also lends itself to movements that are familiar to children everywhere, such as "hammering nails," "sawing the wood," "laying the bricks," and "painting the walls."

Call-and-response songs also work very well in the international language of children's music. Singing a verse and having children echo the verse back allows the children to interact with the singer and learn the song more effectively in a playful manner. For children who don't speak the language, this technique is essential in teaching the words and meaning.

Stephen also recommends using syllables such as "la, la, la" in the lyrics of a song, which enables young children to sing along with ease.

Animal sounds are universal as well. The "mooing" of a cow, "quacking" of a duck, or "barking" of a dog, provide something familiar when learning a new song, and also facilitates children's ability to join into the song when language is a barrier that needs to be overcome.

Although children may not fully understand the lyrics of a song, they are able to translate the sounds, to visually understand different movements, and to thus discover the amazing international language of music that speaks to them through rhythms, notes, and movements.

Stephen uses a simple recipe for reaching children musically "where they live," no matter what their culture. The ingredients are: relatable themes, a playful presentation, communicating a sense of wonder, universal truths, humor, and love. An example of a relatable theme might be a song about the color yellow, such as Stephen's "Wrap Me Up in Yellow":

> The sun comes up with a yellow glow,
> Makes everything in the whole world grow.
> Wrap me up, wrap me up, wrap me up
> In yellow.

A song that communicates love might be Stephen's song "Gotta Lotta Love," about the love a child has for each member of his or her family.

> That's my father, there's my mother,
> Those are my sisters, I'm their brother.
> That's only part of my family tree;
> Got a lot of love surrounding me.

Whether singing songs to children in America or in China, Stephen recognizes he is playing an essential role in children's futures by exposing them to the wonder of music. Drawing inspiration from his childhood experiences of sitting around a campfire and singing along to the folk songs of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, Stephen knows he is helping to plant a love of music in children and to make music a part of their everyday lives.

Now, after such a long career doing what he loves, Stephen also gets to experience the children he inspired years ago as parents who return to see him with *their* children and express gratitude for the impact he has had on their lives.

The importance of music as a universal language defies all boundaries and erases all borders. It has the power to connect each and every one of us. Without it, our world would be *very* different.

Stephen is the recipient of many awards, including but not limited to the National Parenting Award, the 2013 Mom's Choice Award, and the 2013 Creative Child Magazine Award.

Farewell and Best Wishes to Jan Graves

by Caroline Presnell

As noted in CMN's *E-News* last May, the Winter-Spring *PIO!* marked the end of almost nineteen years' service to CMN by Jan Graves as our principal graphic designer. With the completion of the Winter-Spring 2014 issue of *Pass It On!*, the journal came to a point of major change in its technical evolution from a stapled, photocopied newsletter to a professionally-printed journal, and then to having the print-style layout in an electronic format with the issues being distributed via the CMN website. With this issue, the journal becomes a wholly digital publication requiring design and production procedures and skills that overlap with but are somewhat different from those needed for print publications.

Jan was initially called in by CMN in late 1995 to help finish up stalled production on a *PIO!* issue, and afterward was asked to continue as the graphic designer. At that time she had a thriving graphic design business. With *PIO!* she stepped into a predecessor's design and layout template already in place, and has been gracious about working within it. (Redesign was considered a couple of times, but the board was reasonably satisfied with what we had and never thought it necessary or prudent to spend the money it would have taken for a do-over.) Over her years with *Pass It On!*, Jan added her own design details tailored to specific issues' content. She created logos for the columns and departments and the Magic Penny articles. She has designed many attention-getting announcement presentations for us. She's been ingenious in finding and adapting appropriate clip art, especially for the songs, and created some of the art herself, and she spiffed up the quality of countless photographs—she can even make mics or elbows disappear! She has also been gracious throughout in dealing with several *PIO!* editors, songs editors, and a couple of CMN administrators (including me).

That's not all. Jan has often been another set of eyes, catching a typo or a strange wording here or there that *PIO!* editorial staff missed. She's a musician, too—currently the music director at her church—and has routinely given an extra polish to lead sheet page notation that is a service not usually available from a graphic designer.

Easy as it is to forget, the era when print on paper had fewer competing communication modes is not ancient history, and Jan was kept busy with CMN's print needs. She laid out the member directory and supplement we printed in alternate years until 2005 (and which, I hear, a few members still consult). She created conference flyers or technically improved for publication

many that had been designed by volunteers. She designed the printed version of Bess Lomax Hawes's 1997 CMN conference keynote speech that we sent to each new member for many years. She designed the *Children's Radio List* we used to publish, and the many revisions of the letterhead needed as text, addresses, and logos changed. For years before the 2001 brochure came out, we were using letter-sized paper membership forms and outreach flyers, and Jan put those together from designs created in consultation with CMN leaders, then did the periodic revisions and updates. She was also called on to convert print materials to technical specs needed for use on our website. And there were many other, small items and services along the way, including a number for which she didn't charge.

But in addition to her graphic design business, Jan always had another professsional part to her life: theater. She acts, directs, and produces as Jan Ellen Graves. Her primary venue is the Redtwist Theatre in Chicago, which she and her husband, Michael Colucci, created some years ago and continue to operate. As theater work came to consume most of her time and energy, she phased out the graphic design business, but was willing to keep *Pass It On!* as about the last surviving project.

So Jan has, for these many years, played an important part in enabling CMN to present itself with a good face to members and the public. She did it not only in the mode of a skilled professional fulfilling a business agreement, for which alone she would have been appreciated, but also as a participant in and supporter of CMN's work and the other people doing it. Those who have had occasion to interact directly with Jan in the course of CMN work will not forget her patience, practical flexibility, and creativity, and her sense of humor that helped carry through many a challenging task. For her important contri-butions, Jan has CMN's gratitude and best wishes as she moves on.

Music with Older Kids

A World Class Boys Choir

by Nanci Schneidinger

Figure 1. The boys choir has been performing Harmonies of the Season annual holiday concerts, like this one in 2013 at the First Congregational Church of Berkeley, from their initial founding in 1998. *(photo courtesy of Nanci Schneidinger)*

Attendees at the 2013 CMN conference in Los Gatos, California, were treated to a performance by twenty-five members of the Pacific Boychoir Academy of Oakland, California, a nondenominational independent day school for boys in grades four through eight. In addition to the day school, the academy has seven after-school choirs of boys ranging in age from four to eighteen years that meet once or twice a week to rehearse.

The academy had humble beginnings in 1998 as a choir consisting of six boys from four families (two of the boys were brothers) and four staff members—Marcia Roy, Stella Brown, Pam Weiner, and Kevin Fox, the founding artistic director—rehearsing once a week at a small local church in Oakland. The San Francisco Bay Area did not have a world class boys choir at the time, so Kevin launched a plan to start one. Since the boys would need to rehearse every day, starting a school was also part of that plan.

By November of the same year, the group had grown to twenty boys. Families paid a small fee and the small faculty was able to rent a copier and use Kinko's to make audition flyers. At this point they had one holiday concert and one spring concert. By the end of the first year, there were thirty-five boys ranging from third to eighth grade in the choir.

Figure 2. The boys choir gave a sendoff concert for their parents in the courtyard of the school the night before leaving for their tour in Vietnam. *(photo courtesy of Nanci Schneidinger)*

Kevin Fox is also a sports fan. He knew singing the national anthem at sporting games would bring much-needed exposure to the choir, and the boys would really get a kick out of it. They tried to record the national anthem to send to sports teams, but in the early years it was a challenge for the boys to hold their own parts. Marcia sang alto with the altos to help out. Eventually, they got their first sports gig singing the national anthem at a Stanford basketball game. Thirteen years later they were asked to perform at the American League Division Series and they now have ongoing gigs with Cal Basketball, Oakland Raiders, Oakland A's, and the Golden State Warriors.

Touring brings more exposure to the choir, and Kevin took the boys on their first three-day tour to

Los Angeles in June of 1999. They sang at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba Linda and at a church service. They did not have much of a repertoire at the time, and Kevin had to sing a few solos. Their first international tour was in 2001 to Australia with twenty-six members, and they have continued to tour internationally.

Kevin's dream of building the choir into a school became a reality in the fall of 2004. The school began in a church in downtown Oakland with nine students. Today the academy is thriving! Ten years after the birth of the school, the Pacific Boychoir Academy has found a new home in North Oakland and currently has fifty-six boys in the school, with 175 boys in the after-school choirs.

Figure 3. Acting in an annual Shakespearean play, *The Tempest*, shown here in the school theatre, helps to round out the creative training for singers at the Pacific Boychoir Academy. *(photo courtesy of Nanci Schneidinger)*

The academy choir is currently, as this article is being written, on tour in Vietnam and Singapore (see Figure 2). Previous international tours have included Spain, Brazil, Germany and Austria, Denmark, Italy, France, Argentina, South Africa, Australia, China, Lithuania, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. The after-school choir also gets to tour, but not internationally.

2004 was also the year the Boychoir won their first Grammy! The award was for best classical album. The Boychoir recorded Mahler's Third Symphony with the San Francisco Symphony, Symphony Chorus, and San Fransisco Girls Chorus. In 2010 they received their second Grammy for their recording of Mahler's Eighth Symphony. In addition to the Grammy for best classical album, the boys received a Grammy for best choral performance.

A typical school day for the students consists of the usual classes—Spanish and Latin, Math, Science, English, History, and PE. The boys have three music classes per day and one double music session when everyone is doing music at once. There are four music staff members on site, and all of the rooms in the school are utilized. The boys get an average of two hours of music per day, which includes music theory and sight singing. The boys also read a Shakespeare play each year and perform it from memory at the end of the school year (see Figure 3). So the boys are not only challenged to sing, but must act as well. The academic classes are creative, fun, and challenging. For example, the fifth-grade boys recently made a music video about the digestive system.

Even though the academy has had some phenomenal exposure with international and national symphonies, has been on *America's Got Talent*, and has sung in Washington, D.C., at the Nelson Mandela memorial service at the National Cathedral, running a choir school isn't without its challenges. The inherent challenges with a boys choir include capturing a boy's voice before it changes and getting children to perform as

Sometimes It's Just Fun

Zachary Salzberg, who graduated from the Academy last year, shared some of his more humorous and memorable moments below.

While on stage in South Africa, a chorister who had to go to the bathroom and could not wait went up to Mr. Fox after one of the songs to ask if he could go to the bathroom. There happened to be a microphone right there, and it was turned on. It picked up the question and the audience heard it. They entire audience burst out laughing.

While on tour in China, Zachary and another chorister gave a speech in Chinese during the concert. After the concert a little girl came up to them, and through a translator, asked why their Chinese was so bad.

Once when the boys were rehearsing the national anthem for the A's game, they were told after the sound check that the song was five seconds too long, and they needed to cut it off.

professionals.

The rehearsal schedules can be rigorous, and it can be a challenge to balance school work with performances. There are a lot of expenses to running a school, and although tuition covers part of it, a significant amount of fundraising is necessary. The idea of a choir school is unfamiliar to many people, so recruiting new boys takes effort.

What are the rewards? Just look at the faces of the boys in this choir school when they are singing. The pure joy in their expressions shows how music has influenced their lives in a positive way. The process of turning a boy who is interested in singing into a world class performer makes it all worth it. There are also the perks of travel and just plenty of plain old fun moments (see sidebar).

As a mother of a PBA student, I can say that the strong feeling of community among the boys and the staff is what I find most appealing. The boys become a family, and they support each other. They come together in song and harmony. More information on the choir can be found at their website: http://www.pacificboychoiracademy.org.

When Zachary was conducting the choir for "Silent Night," he looked down at the music stand and noticed that the only words he had in front of him were in German. He went along with it, and hoped for the best.

Music in Bloom

The Most Amazing Musical Instruments

by Maureen Conlin

Ideas for working with younger children

Music time provides young children with an opportunity to explore and experience themselves as the most amazing musical instruments. Tune up by bending, stretching, twisting, shaking, wiggling, and moving to music. Tap a steady beat on a wood block, changing the tempo so children wiggle fast, medium, and slow. Try this poem for the children to wiggle to:

> Wiggling Poem
> *by Maureen Conlin*
> *© 2014 M Conlin*
>
> I wiggle to a wiggling beat
> From my head to my feet.
> I wiggle fast and I wiggle slow,
> I wiggle and wiggle, now watch me go.
> (*Children wiggle all body parts fast and then slow*.)
>
> I wiggle to a wiggling beat,
> Elbows, shoulders, knees, and seat.
> I wiggle fast and I wiggle slow.
> I wiggle and wiggle, now watch me go!

Explore the most amazing instruments with children by cutting out a two-foot-tall paper doll that can be taped to a wall or bulletin board. Draw or cut out pictures of a set of hands for clapping, snapping, tapping, and patting the beat; a set of shoes for marching, hopping, jumping, skipping, walking; ballet slippers or tap shoes for dancing; a heart for keeping the beat and pulse of the body; ears for listening; a mouth for whistling, humming, singing, and chanting; eyes for seeing; and don't forget to add a nose. Talk with the children about ways in which they are the most amazing musical instruments. Attach the cut-out pictures to the paper doll (I call him Whistling Willy) using sticky gum. If possible, laminate Whistling Willy for future use.

Continue to guide the children on their musical journey by asking them to create their own body percussion as they clap hands, tap feet, pop cheeks, and snap their fingers or march to a steady beat. Chant or sing:

Move with Me
by Maureen Conlin
© 2014 M Conlin

One, two, three, move with me.
What an amazing instrument I can be.
I clap and tap, sing a song,
Or with my feet I march along.
With my hands I pop, pop, pop.
(*Children cheek pop with their hands to create a cheek drum.*)
With my feet I hop, hop, hop,
Then it's time to stop, stop, stop.
One, two, three, move with me.
What an amazing instrument I can be.

To encourage children to explore the different pitches in their voices, choose a word and have the children repeat that word in a high voice, low voice, monster voice, squeaky mouse voice, loud and soft voices, singing voice, underwater voice, big voice, or little voice. An American slide whistle is a fun musical instrument that is also useful to help children explore the sound of their voices. Play the slide whistle and ask children to mimic the sound as they slide their voices down and up, and then have the children move their bodies down and up to the sound of the slide whistle playing fast and then slow.

Teach children how to whistle. Share with them how to make a circle with their mouth, place the tongue behind the bottom teeth, and then pretend to blow out a birthday candle. Encourage the children to try and make the sound using the air that passes through their lips rather than by making vocal sounds to imitate a whistle. Learning to play any musical instrument takes practice. It might be just a small squeak at first, but with practice it will grow into a big whistle.

Snapping fingers is another way for children to explore how they are the most amazing instrument. Teaching children can be "a snap" if you show them which fingers to use. The song "Where Is Thumbkin?" with a few lyric changes can be used to share with children which fingers to use when snapping.

Where is Thumbkin?
Where is Thumbkin?
Here I am.
Here I am.
How are you today sir?
Very well I thank you.
Don't go away,
I need you today.

Where is pointer?
Where is pointer?
Here I am.
Here I am.
How are you today sir?
Very well I thank you.
Run away.
I don't need you today.

Where is Tall Man?
Where is Tall Man?
Here I am.

Here I am.
How are you today sir?
Very well I thank you.
Don't run away.
I need you today.

Instruct the children to place Tall Man on top of Thumbkin with pointer out of the way and pointing up to the sky. Thumb and middle finger press together to say "hello" and then push away as they say "goodbye." As the fingers slide away from each other they create a snapping sound. Finish the snapping lesson by singing these lyrics to the tune of "Where is Thumbkin?":

Now we're snapping.
Now we're snapping.
Snap, snap, snap!
Snap, snap, snap!
This is how we snap now.
This is how we snap now.
It's a snap!

Explore dynamics and tempo with the most amazing instrument using the sound of little hands clapping to a steady beat. Clap with hands cupped, fingers opened or tapping on knees with open palms. Clap loudly, quietly, quickly, and slowly. Share with young children the symbols for *forte* (loud), *mezzo forte* (medium loud) and *piano* (soft). Draw the symbols on card stock paper and play the loud/soft game as children clap their hands according to the symbol that is shown to them. Change the tempo of clapping hands as children clap fast and slow following the steady beat of a drum or tapping on a wooden instrument. Have the children take turns being the leader of the game.

Bring out the artists in the most amazing instruments by having the children create a collage of pictures from old magazines that demonstrate the many ways that children move, sing, dance, or show different body parts used to create the musical child.

Music is inside each one of us. Our brain, our heart, and all the other parts create the most amazing musical instrument. As we guide young children through their musical journey, let's remember to teach children how to explore the musical possibilities that are within each and every one of them.

Pro Song

Break the Barrier

by Dave Kinnoin
© 2014 Dave Kinnoin

The Nitty-Gritty of Songwriting

I was thinking about Jackie Robinson recently because a composer I was playing golf with in an ASCAP tournament had a grandfather who was part of Robinson's legal counsel. It reminded me of a song I wrote with Jonathan Sprout called "Break the Barrier," which was about Robinson's becoming the first black baseball player in the major leagues. I had to break a few barriers to become the first professional songwriter in my family, many of whom looked askance at my pursuit. I drove a truck for 38,000 hours with a guitar and small keyboard in the jockey box before I became the songwriter I needed to be to succeed. My brothers and sisters were distinguishing themselves in white collar careers and had letters after their names on their business cards as I got up at 4:30 in the morning with my Teamster's ID in my wallet. It never occurred to me I might not succeed, but I was surprised it took so darn long. This surprise was due to my inflated opinion of my craft. I've heard that you can get smarter by exercising your brain. I believe that happened to me. Here are a few things I've learned along the way that may help you break a few barriers of your own. Some of this is an analog for life.

1. *You have a song idea you're crazy about, you've started writing it, and you love what you have so far. You keep going, trusting your muse. After a while you realize you don't have a compelling "hook" (usually the title).* This is not a death knoll, but it's usually not a good thing. There are many winning songs, and by that I mean artistic successes, not necessarily commercial successes, that have no hook per se. The song "The Rose" by Amanda McBroom and "The Connection" by Randy Sharp and Jack Wesley Routh come to mind. But even with these two, the songs build in such an incredibly dramatic and lyrical way that it would have been absolutely wrong to have a chorus/hook. (Their titles evoke the hearts of the messages—these are great titles.) For the vast majority of songs that please both the writer and the audience, a strong hook is a big plus. If you've determined that your song falls into the needs-a-great-hook category, do what you have to do to make this happen. This may mean starting over with your initial idea, finding that hook, and letting everything set it up. This hook may be an ordinary word or phrase that becomes memorable because of the story that supports it. Or it may be a clever sounding or more original sounding word or phrase.

2. *You get the feeling the song is not a winner.*
   Just start over. If you're not feelin' it, no one else will, either. And "polishing a turd" in the production will not save the song. It just hides the smell.

3. *You notice that some of your verses set up the chorus better than others.*
   You need to rewrite the substandard verses. If the verse does not make the listener hungry for the chorus, you have failed.

4. *You notice that some lines don't develop the story very well, but they sure rhyme nicely, the beats fit perfectly, the poetic devices flourish, they sing well, and you've grown very fond and proud of them.*
   Rewrite these lines. If a syllable, word, phrase, sentence, or section does not earn its keep, it's gotta go. You have only a few minutes to tell your story. Don't squander the beats.

5. *Midway through, someone informs you that the kind of song you're writing doesn't sell and asks you why you're wasting your time.*
   If the song rings true to your thoughts and feelings and tells a story you want to tell in a way that pleases you, it's worth writing. Chasing the marketplace, chasing trends, and trying to please segments of society can really mess up a worthwhile, profitable songwriting experience. Think of some of the best songs of all time, especially the ones that are kinda odd. Can't you just hear the voices saying to those writers back then, "You're making a mistake, nitwit"? Now, I've heard some crappy songs in my day, and I've been one of those naysayers when asked what I think. And I do think some ideas are better than others, and blah, blah, blah. But my point is, if someone else's negative opinion is stopping you from pursuing a song you believe in, keep your sovereignty. A life spent trying to please others when doing so violates who you are is pathetic.

6. *You've been seeing evidence that you weren't born a genius, you have a burning desire to prevail as a songwriter, and you sense your craft isn't up to professional standards. You keep cranking out songs that have some great parts, but you know the songs aren't quite nailin' it.*
   These are probably your practice songs, the ones you write as you're putting in your 10,000 hours.* Remember, practice doesn't make perfect; perfect practice makes perfect. Get a mentor who's worthy of your muse and who can guide you in turning those good songs into great songs. If, however, you sense that you're getting there on your own, go ahead and press on without a mentor. But stop periodically for a reality check. Are you really clever enough to figure it out alone? I would guess that most of the best songs of all time were written by persons without a mentor per se. This does not speak against my point. The day I got a mentor was the day I really got on my way to success. If you don't need a mentor, you don't need to read this essay, and I recommend you stop reading it right now because tutorials like this become rather laughable to someone like you.

7. *You've hit a dead end on having subsequent verses be as brilliant as your first verse.*
   Try "writing backwards." That is, write the end of the verse first, then write the lines that set up that last line. I do this frequently. I can remember spending hours alone in the dark, frustrated, with a deadline looming, so tired I can hardly stay awake, all the while forgetting this simple technique. What the heck am I going to say in the second verse? Well, what does that last line have to do? *Set up the chorus*. Okay, so what's the rhyme scheme? What words evoke the story points and the emotion? Make a list of those

words. Say or sing them out loud. All of them. The good ones and the bad ones. A bad one can lead you to a good one. Once that last line is in place, the herculean task of getting that verse at least as strong as the first is not so daunting. Writing a winning song is not for sissies who believe in writer's block; it's for those who are tough enough to buckle down and keep working in a sensible way.

8. *Your friends are getting their songs recorded left and right, and some of those songs don't seem as good as yours do to you. You're kinda mad.* First of all, their songs probably are better than yours. The cream tends to rise. Or maybe they have an open door you don't have, or maybe their type of music has different standards of excellence that are inscrutable to you. Or maybe their grooves are so infectious their crummy lyrics just kinda go along for the ride and this irritates you as you cling to your old-school sensibilities and flip burgers for a living. What did Popeye say? "I yam what I yam." If you wanna change your style, there's no shame in that, but it can be perilous to your artistic integrity. It can also be liberating and exhilarating. This essay is about getting to that great song that's inside you whether or not that song has commercial viability at the time you write it. As your fellow human being who wants you to be healthy, significant, and satisfied, I hereby submit that your best bet is to write the very best song you can and let the chips fall where they may. A truly great song will likely sound wonderful whether it's produced country, pop, disco, rock, jazz, R & B, neoclassical, Latin, or anything else. A memorable melodic and lyrical story is a prize all its own. Please yourself. Good luck.

Jonathan Sprout and I pleased ourselves with this lyric:

Break the Barrier
words and music by Jonathan Sprout and Dave Kinnoin
© 2000 Kanukatunes (ASCAP) and Song Wizard Music (ASCAP)
from Jonathan Sprout's More American Heroes *CD; used by permission*

Verse 1
I've got my bat. I've got my mitt.
I've got the skills. I'm physically fit.
So what's stopping me from walking on in?
There's something here I cannot see?
A silent code about people like me.
I'm not welcome 'cause of the color of my skin.
It shouldn't have to be this way.
All I want is a chance to play.

Chorus
We gotta break the barrier.
Come on, everybody, one and all,
We gotta break that wall.

Verse 2
There is a fire in my soul.
Sometimes it's hard to keep control.
I have a plan that's gonna work out.
With every hit and stolen base,
With every catch, I'll make my case.
Before I'm done, the fans will shout.
In this democracy,
Nobody's free till we all are free.

Repeat chorus

Bridge

Jackie, you know how to play the game.
Baseball is never gonna be the same!

---

* A rule for success as defined by Malcolm Gladwell in his book *Outliers: The Story of Success*

Thoughts to Chew

Living in Dynamic Mode

by Peter Alsop

I have great admiration for all of the arts, as I know that pursuing any art form helps us learn how to live in a "dynamic mode," where not every question needs to be answered. In fact, many of life's questions have no clear answers at all—ever. The arts are process oriented. They teach us to look at *how* we do what we do. We can never dance the perfect dance or sing the perfect song. We can only work on our dancing or singing. No matter how wonderfully we may have performed something, we can always improve and embellish how we did it. This is wonderful!

When the great Spanish cellist Pablo Casals turned seventy-six years old, an interviewer asked him how it felt to have mastered the cello. He replied, "Mastered it? Why I've just learned how to play the damn thing!" He said it in Spanish of course, so that's probably a loose translation, but his message was clear.

The Value of Process

In the arts we may set a goal and strive to make progress toward that goal, but we know that we will never really finish, for as soon as we've polished something, we notice something else that needs work. When we understand that living is an art form, too, then we simply work to improve, and achieving the goal becomes secondary to how we work toward it.

The value in paying attention to the process of "how" comes from reinforcing the idea that it's the "doing" that's important, not just the outcome. This idea is not supported in our culture, where we are taught to set goals and stay on task. As we get older, we are encouraged to "act like an adult," and we learn to operate in more of a static mode, in which we follow set rules and focus on goals, while life continues on around us. Our economic and political systems teach us messages like "Keep your eyes on the prize," or "The ends justify the means." Yet these goal-focused formulas often do not work at all. For it's clear that if our end goal is a peaceful society, we cannot achieve it through violent means. Our educational institutions encourage a fear-based static adult obsession with high test scores, and many teachers feel forced to teach children what to think instead of how to think in order to get those high scores.

When we operate in static mode, we miss important time with our loved ones.

We miss opportunities to grow that we didn't see "on the way by." And, at times, our goals seem so unattainable that we lose interest and give up. Some of us adults can even get so goal-oriented that we refuse to pursue an activity if we don't think the goal can be reached.

My cousin Suzi turned thirty-five recently, and I asked her how it felt to be thirty-five. She replied, "Okay I guess, but I'd always wanted to be a veterinarian."

"Your kids are in school now," I said. "Why don't you take some part-time classes? You can still be a veterinarian."

"No, I don't think so," she said. "It would take me fifteen years at that rate. Good Lord! I'd be fifty years old by then."

"Well," I replied, "in fifteen years you're going to be fifty years old anyway. Wouldn't it be nice if you were a veterinarian?"

Most children's music professionals are familiar with living in the dynamic mode. We know how to live in the present, be flexible, laugh, play, and have fun, but if any of us are uncomfortable with these things, maybe it's time to get a good teacher, preferably someone under the age of six.

Hire a Child to Be Your Life Coach!

You won't have to pay them much. Little kids are not yet invested in our capitalist system, so you probably won't even need money; just pay attention to them. If you don't have a child in your immediate family, you can borrow one from a relative or a friend. Clear your calendar for the morning and follow your little life coach around. Do whatever it is they ask, short of doing something dangerous or buying them too much ice cream. (We want to avoid getting in trouble with the parents.) Remember to breathe deeply, and try to curb your urge to "make sense" of things or to "get something important accomplished." You are in the middle of a life class, so put on your anthro-pologist's hat and marvel at how well your coach lives in the present. Working with one of my many life coaches, I made the discovery that children are not much of a problem if I don't have anything else to do. Amazing!

As little kids, we start life off with a fairly healthy feelings vocabulary. Some of us lose that on the way to adulthood. If an adult feels angry, little kids notice right away, and they may avoid us, or they may bring us something to help us feel better. They often model incredibly compassionate caring when we are scared or sad or grieving, because they know how to be available. They simply want to be with us. Wow!

When we try to learn to whistle, or blow up a balloon, spin a top, or pump ourselves on a swing, ride a bicycle without training wheels for the first time, or sing a song, we always face the risk of failure. Each of us is vulnerable inside, regardless of our outward bravado. No one likes to be made fun of or ridiculed. We know that those of us afraid of our own feelings may hide our own pain by laughing at other people's pain. But in dynamic mode, when we fail to reach our goal, we may change our goal or our behavior, or both, but we keep trying. We modify and we improve. Our self-confidence goes up, and we become less afraid of failure and more willing and able to reach out for more learning. These small victories build our sense of self-worth, and it's clear that we're all in this boat together.

Let 'em Laugh! (excerpt)
by Peter Alsop

© 1986 Moose School Music (BMI)

Verse

Everybody makes mistakes when
We're learning something new.
I look funny on my roller skates
Because it's hard to do!
I don't care if they laugh at me;
I think I'm funny too!
Though I fall down, I won't give up,
And they'll cheer me when I'm through! So,

Chorus

Let 'em laugh! Let 'em laugh! Let 'em laugh!
Let 'em call me a clown!
Let 'em laugh! Let 'em laugh! Let 'em laugh!
That won't stop me from getting up when I fall down!

Songs of Vulnerability and Laughter That Empower

I delight in writing or performing a song that gets family members laughing. When we laugh together, we join one another and connect on a very basic human level. A funny song that does not make fun of others has great power to release tensions that have built up around whatever tough issues the song addresses. Even though we all know what it's like to be in the midst of an emotional upheaval, when it happens to us, we may feel that we're different than everyone else—that somehow we're abnormal and vulnerable. When we sing and laugh together in community, we are reminded on a visceral level that we are not alone. We are not the only one who has acquired dents along life's dynamic road. There is nothing wrong with any of us.

Those of us who write and perform for children and their families have the high honor of being able to pass on what we've learned about human interactions to children and parents who are looking for options that will work for them. The songs and stories we write and choose to perform help them navigate through this delicious sticky jam called "family life." And when we share our insights about how we live in a flexible dynamic mode or how we are vigilant about the trappings of a static life style, when we sing and laugh and even cry as we express our feelings, we model healthy dynamic behaviors for the families we entertain.

Sometimes Si, Sometimes No!
by Peter Alsop
© 2007 Moose School Music (BMI)

Chorus

Sometimes si, sometimes no;
That's the way that life goes.
Sometimes si, sometimes no;
That's the way of life!

Verse 1

We all wish life was perfect.
We want things to be right.
We love to get a hug.
We hate to have a fight.
So when you're feeling low,
When your life is trashed,

Find a friend and cry, and then
Have a good laugh!

Chorus

Verse 2

So when life feels scary
Sit down and take a breath.
Find your friends or family,
The ones who love you best.
Just feel all the feelings
Going on inside.
Sometimes life is easy,
Sometimes it takes us for a ride! It's?

Chorus (2x)

So let's share and model what we've learned from our kids about how to live in dynamic mode, for these seemingly small skills that we've acquired that help us live with ambivalence are critical to the survival of our own families, our relationships, our countries, and our world. Pass it on!

An Exciting Blend of Old and New

The CMN 2014 Annual Conference

by Jenny Heitler-Klevans

Join us at the Twenty-Seventh Annual International Conference of the Children's Music Network, September 19–21, 2014, at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia. The CMN Annual Conference is an amazing experience. We share songs, ideas, and resources, plus teaching tools, songwriting techniques, community-building skills, and marketing tips. In spontaneous song swaps and networking, as well as in structured workshops and presentations, we expand our knowledge and reignite our spirits.

This year's conference is shaping up to be an exciting blend of old and new. Honoring our elders who have passed on this year, there will be a sing-along tribute to Pete Seeger and Faith Petric, as well as a workshop to continue singing the great old songs. The keynote this year will be a panel entitled "Roots and Branches: Growing into the Future of Children's Music." Our featured panelists will discuss the changing landscape of children's music while recognizing our culture and heritage. Panelists include Tyler Bickford, PhD, ethnomusicologist and assistant professor of childhood studies at the University of Pittsburgh; Jessica "Culture Queen" Smith, owner of Culture Kingdom Kids; and Mindy Thomas of SiriusXM Radio's *Kids Place Live*.

There will be *many* exciting workshops offered at this year's conference, and you will be able to get credit for professional development while learning, singing, and having fun. There are four workshop slots, with five workshops in each slot, so there will be plenty to choose from. We have workshops on early childhood from experienced presenters, as well as the always popular "Early Childhood Song Swap." We also have tracks on songwriting and creativity to get your creative juices flowing, expanding, and improving your musical work with children—techniques to improve your musical skills and teaching practice, from classroom and music teachers to performing musicians to music therapists and beyond. For performers (or anybody who gets up in front of an audience) we have a track of workshops on building and enhancing your career as a performer/recording artist. Finally, we have our beloved song swaps, in which each person gets a chance to share songs on a topic such as funny songs, environmental songs, and singing games.

The Magic Penny Award, named after the song by Malvina Reynolds, is the Children's Music Network's lifetime achievement award, honoring someone in our community who has dedicated their life to empowering children through

music. This year's Magic Penny Award recipient is Ruth Pelham, a singer, songwriter, educator, and activist who brings her unique vision of world peace and social change to children and adults around the globe. Ruth's music touches the heart and reflects the full integrity of the human spirit through her powerful anthems like "Turning of the World" and "Under One Sky." As a founding member of the Children's Music Network and a board member for many years, Ruth has given her talents generously to building our organization. We look forward to celebrating her achievements at this year's Magic Penny Award presentation.

It wouldn't be a CMN conference without the round-robin, an open mic where each person who wants to can perform a song, poem, chant, or dance. We have time set aside both Friday and Saturday nights for the round-robin. This event showcases the incredible talent within CMN, and allows us to sing along in glorious harmony. After the round-robin each night, there will be jamming, singing, dancing—most likely into the wee hours.

For those who have never experienced CMN's international conference, there will be newcomer's circles Friday evening and Saturday morning. Newcomers to CMN can also be paired with more experienced "buddies." These features will help first-time attendees get to know people and feel welcomed into the circle.

This year we have a few special extras. Beth Bierko, longtime CMN member and certified Kripalu yoga teacher, will be leading a couple of all-levels yoga classes, so you can begin your morning refreshed and ready for new experiences. She will also be leading an afternoon "Let Your Yoga Dance" session, a combination of dance, gentle yoga, breath work, and moving meditation, all done to wonderful world music and songs from CMN. Queen, who thrilled us with her drumming a few years ago at the Zion conference, will be offering a drum-making workshop. We're also trying a new mentor idea, which will allow participants with knowledge and experience in any area (songwriting, recording, performing, teaching, residencies, marketing, PR, booking, teacher workshops, etc.) to share their expertise with others individually.

You can stock up on great music by fellow participants (or sell your own music) in the sales area, get great stuff and support CMN at the same time at the silent auction and the glad rags rack, and share your songs via the paper song swap.

We are holding this year's conference in an exciting new location. Situated on 110 acres just outside Washington, D.C., the National Conference Center is designed especially for retreats and conferences. Each person will have their own private room with a comfy bed and bath. The food includes locally grown produce and sustainably-caught seafood. There are many options from hot dishes, soups, sandwich fixings, and salad bar to scrumptious desserts and fresh fruit. Coffee will be available throughout the day. The price for the conference is all-inclusive (conference fee, room and board).

We hope you can join us this year in Virginia for this unforgettable jam-packed weekend of music, fun, friendship, growth, and community!

The Life and Breadth of CMN

News and Notes from the CMN Board

by Anna Stange, CMN Board President

The Children's Music Network: We are an amazing group of people working individually and collectively to make the world a better place using music. As an organization, we are an organism —living, growing, adapting—as we must, in order to remain relevant and thrive in an ever-changing world. We, the members of CMN, are our greatest asset, and we are the life and breadth of the organization.

We have made significant strides as an organization as we grow to fulfill our mission. Led by the CMN Board of Directors, our dedicated staff members and gracious volunteers have steadfastly worked to keep CMN up-to-date in this era of media transformation. You will see some of these efforts in this issue of *PIO!* The changes to the online format of our journal should make it easier for you to read and use the articles and features, while a generous donor has made it possible to still provide *PIO!* to those who need it in paper form.

As a board of directors, we work by consensus. Sometimes, this process of decision making can take a very long time, but in the end, we reach a decision that is acceptable to all in what we strive to have in the best interest of our members and the strength of the organization. For example, the process of updating our logo took well over a year and consideration of well over a dozen logo designs. We had long discussions and solicited feedback from both current and prospective members, along with nonmember industry professionals, about how our logo and web presence communicate who we are and what we do. This new logo, compatible in all formats, will help CMN develop a recognizable "brand" and communicate our mission to a wider network of children's musicians and others who value children and high quality children's music.

CMN is growing up, and that means we are growing older. We mourn the passing of our elders while we share in the joy of welcoming new people into our musical family. After more than a quarter century, we must constantly look to find ways to nurture and involve the next generation of children's musicians. We must continue to grow; the alternative is death. To live, we must continue to "Pass It On."

Guided by our mission and strategic plan, our board of directors is focused on expanding the diversity of our mostly female, mostly white, mostly grey-haired, mostly folk music membership. We are committed to increasing

member access, increasing scholarships for conference attendance and marketing the resources we offer in ways that will proactively welcome members who represent the breadth of all people in this world. All of this concurrently while making CMN more accessible to all teachers and others whose work with children would benefit from the resources we offer.

As we move ahead in our work (and joy) we welcome Andy Zamenes and Tim Seston to new three-year terms on the board of directors. We say thank you to Liz Buchanan who has given tirelessly during her tenure on the board. We also say thank you to Jan Graves, our long time graphic designer, who has helped produce *PIO!* for many years.

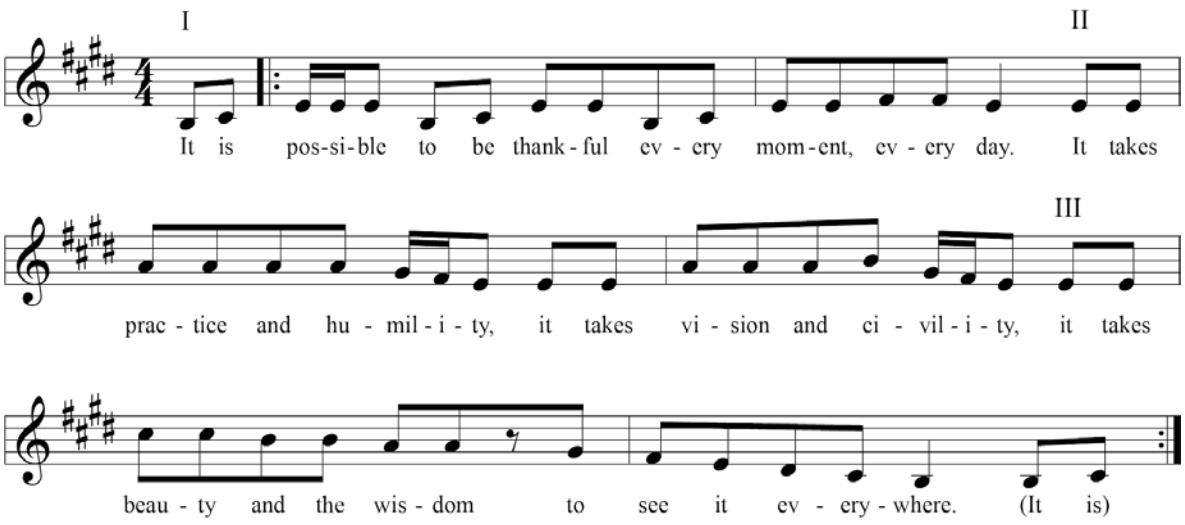
Every Moment, Every Day

words and music by Susan Salidor
© 2001 Susan Salidor

00:00 00:58

This simple three-part round of Thanksgiving was written post-9/11/01.

A three-part round


I
II
It is pos-si-ble to be thank-ful ev - ery mom-ent, ev - ery day. It takes
III
prac - tice and hu - mil - i - ty, it takes vi - sion and ci - vil - i - ty, it takes
beau - ty and the wis - dom to see it ev - ery - where. (It is)

It is possible to be thankful every moment, every day.
It takes practice and humility.
It takes vision and civility.
It takes beauty and the wisdom to see it everywhere.

Many a Good Tree

words and music by Matthew Witten
© 1994 Matthew Witten

00:00 03:52

Chorus
D G A D
Ma-ny a good tree have I known in my day. Syr-up and pa - per they
G A D G A
give with-out pay. Ma - ple ash, oak, and pine:
D G A G
Take care of them and they'll do fine.
A Verse D G A D
1. Spread - ing strong roots they hold the ground. Keep all the
G A G A
soil from wash - ing down the ri - ver.
D G A D
Trunks grow rings year af - ter year. My grand-child may some-day

Chorus

Many a good tree have I known in my day.
Syrup and paper they give without pay.
Maple, ash, oak, and pine:
Take care of them and they'll do fine.

1. Spreading strong roots they hold the ground,
Keep all the soil from washing down the river.
Trunks grow rings year after year.
My grandchild may someday see them here

Chorus

2. Branches hold caterpillars and birds' nests
Where little chicks try their best to fly away.
Buds grow to leaves that soak up the sun,
Make the light food. Oh, how it's done is a mystery.

Chorus

3. Trees give us shade and oxygen,
Colors in autumn and heat in the winter (when it's cold).
I can't think of better friends
Than these green giants that bend in the wind.

Chorus

Rover the Reading Dog

words and music by John Keenan and Jo-Anne Wilson Keenan
© 2014 John Keenan and Jo-Anne Wilson Keenan
reprinted by permission from their Literacy Songs for Little Ones Songbook

00:00 02:34

This song is about a dog that visits care centers, classrooms, and libraries to motivate children to read. Individual children take turns reading to the dog. The dog provides each child with a nonjudgmental listener and builds the child's confidence as a reader. Reading dogs exist in real life. They and their handlers must be trained through an organization such as Therapy Dogs International. John and Jo-Anne have also written "Readin' to Rosie," about a reading dog who is Rover's sister.

Verse
G D7 G D7 G
1.There is a dog who is my friend. He lis-tens to me read.
D7 G D7 G
I feel good a-bout my-self when he stays with me.
Chorus
C G
Come on, Rov-er, won't you come o-ver?
D7 G D7 G
Rov-er the Read-ing Dog.

1. There is a dog who is my friend.
He listens to me read.
I feel good about myself
When he stays with me.

Chorus
Come on, Rover,
Won't you come over?
Rover the Reading Dog.

2. He stays with me while I read
No matter how long I take.
He never makes fun of me
Or laughs at my mistakes.

Chorus

3. Sometimes when I read out loud
I feel afraid.
But when I read to Rover,
I feel calm and safe.

Chorus

4. As soon as I see Rover
I want to read some more.
I pick up a book to read
When he walks in the door.

Chorus (twice)

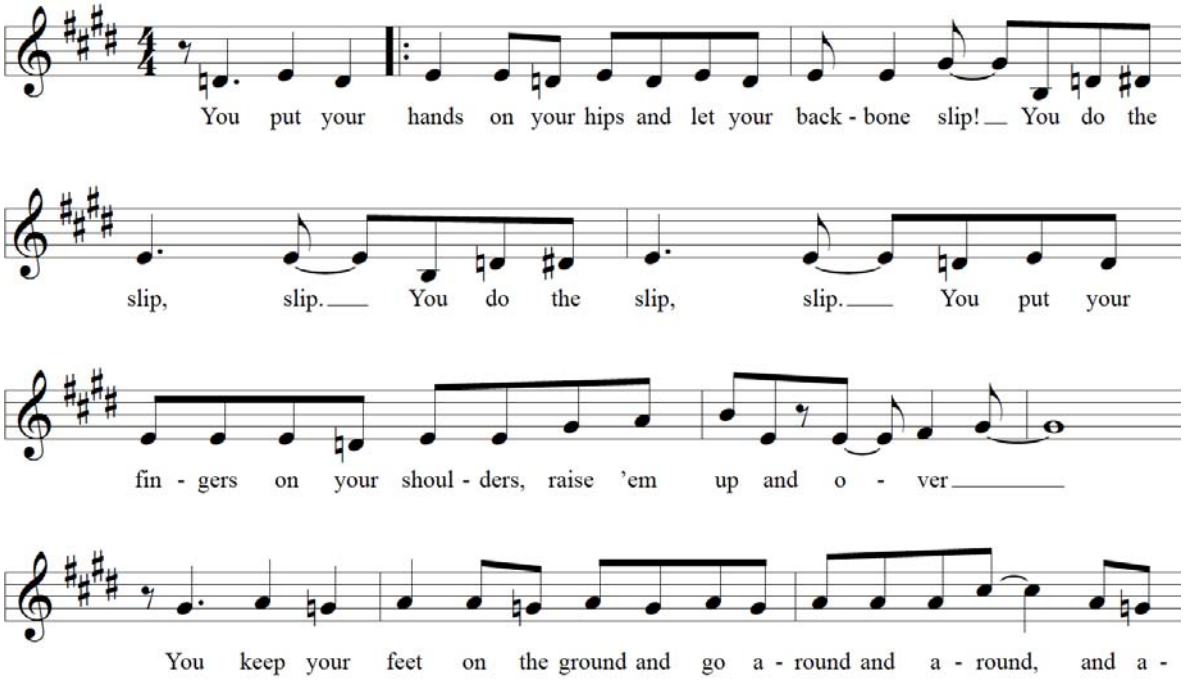
The Slip

words and music by Valerie Leonhart Smalkin
© 2014 Valerie Leonhart Smalkin

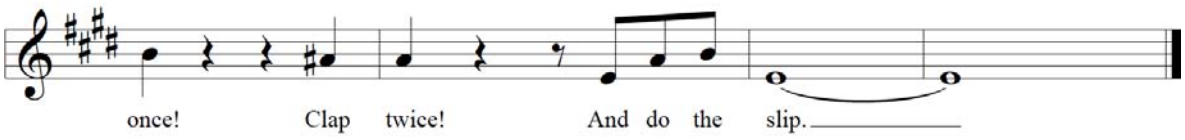
00:00 02:06

The CMN Internet forum is a fabulous resource! Recently a member posted this query: "I've got a very active young after school chorus. They are very antsy at the end of their school day, and I'd like some short activities/games/songs with a lot of movement—but no running—to use as a way to get their sillies out before we settle down to sing." Among the many great responses was this original song from Valerie, who has been using "The Slip" for thirty years or so with choirs, classes, kids. She cautions: "I always say 'No fingers in the mouth' for the funny faces." The basic slip move is a backwards hula, or a two-handed digging motion.

The basic "slip" move is a backwards hula.


You put your hands on your hips and let your back - bone slip! You do the
slip, slip. You do the slip, slip. You put your
fin - gers on your shoul - ders, raise 'em up and o - ver
You keep your feet on the ground and go a - round and a - round, and a -

round, and a - round, and a round, and a - round. You make a
fun - ny face, but don't you make a sow - ow - ound!
6
Clap-pa once! Clap twice! And do the slip!
You put your el - bows high and put your chin down low, and do the
slip, slip. You do the slip, slip. Ya' see how far 'round those hips
will go - ho, oh! You put your hands straight out in
front of you, and do the slip, slip. You do the slip, slip. Raise 'em up!
Put 'em down, and now we're al - most throu - oo - ough!
Clap-pa once! Clap twice! And do the slip. Clap-pa



Verse 1

You put your hands on your hips and let your backbone slip!
You do the slip, slip. You do the slip, slip.
You put you fingers on your shoulders, raise 'em up and over.
You keep your feet on the ground and go around and around,
And around, and around, and around, and around.
You make a funny face, but don't you make a sow- ow- ound!
Clappa once, clap twice and do the slip.

Repeat verse 1

Verse 2

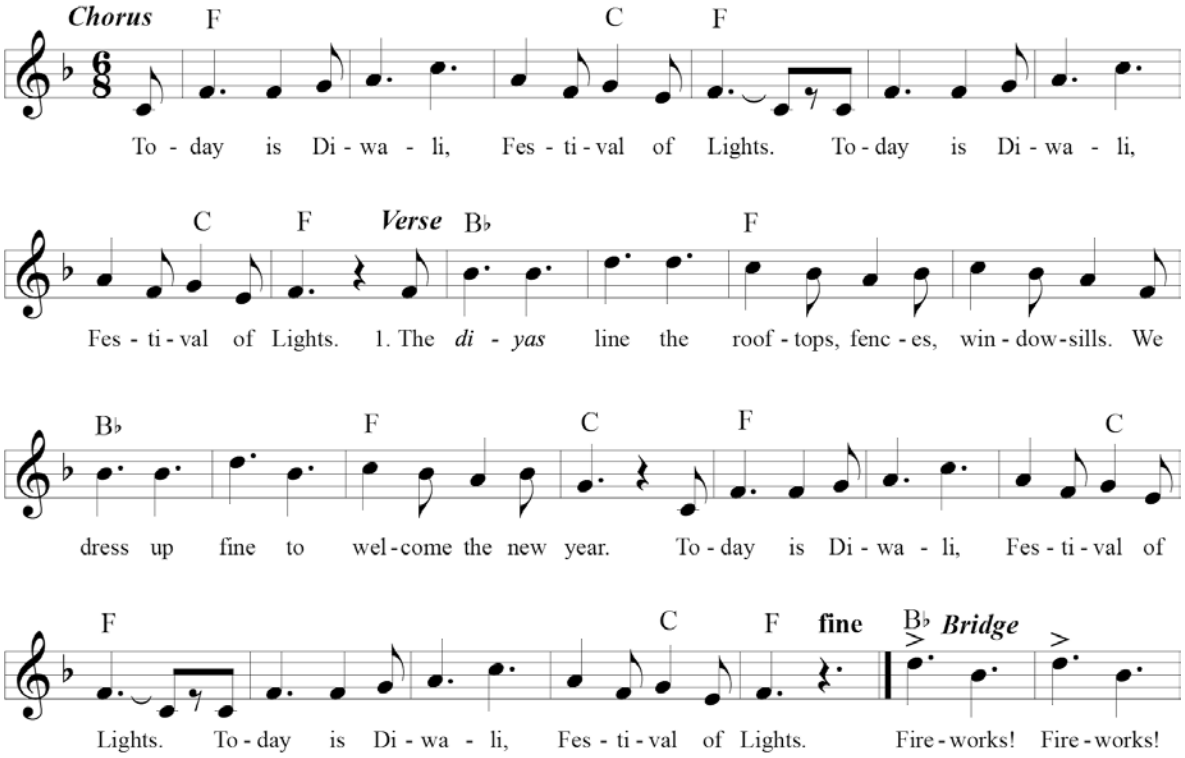
You put your elbows high and put your chin down low,
And do the slip, slip. You do the slip, slip.
Ya' see how far 'round those hips will go-ho, oh!
You put your hands straight out in front of you,
And do the slip, slip. You do the slip, slip.
Raise 'em up! Put 'em down, and now we're almost through.
Clappa once! Clap twice! And do the slip.
Clappa once! Clap twice! And do the slip.

Today is Diwali

words and music by Kathleen Virmani
© 2013 Kathleen Virmani

00:00 00:56

Kathleen writes: "In my classes, I use a song to teach about the celebration called Diwali (pronounced "di-VAL-ly"), which is observed in India at the end of October or beginning of November. It marks the beginning of the new fiscal year. It is hoped that Lakshmi, Hindu goddess of prosperity and fortune, will visit your home and give her blessing for a happy and prosperous new year. The name Diwali is a contraction of the Sanskrit word *deepavali*, meaning "row of lamps." Small clay oil lamps, called *diyas* or *deepas*, are lit and placed outside to signify the triumph of good over evil. I have been in India for Diwali several times and couldn't find a song about it, so I wrote one. It is suitable for pre-K through grade three. I encourage the children to act out lighting the lamps and jumping up for the fireworks."


Chorus
F C F
To - day is Di - wa - li, Fes - ti - val of Lights. To - day is Di - wa - li,
C F Verse B♭ F
Fes - ti - val of Lights. 1. The di - yas line the roof - tops, fenc - es, win - dow-sills. We
B♭ F C F C
dress up fine to wel-come the new year. To - day is Di - wa - li, Fes - ti - val of
F C F fine B♭ Bridge
Lights. To - day is Di - wa - li, Fes - ti - val of Lights. Fire-works! Fire-works!

Chorus

Today is Diwali, Festival of Lights.
Today is Dwali, Festival of Lights.

1. The *diyas* line the rooftops, fences, windowsills.
We dress up fine to welcome the new year.

Chorus

Bridge

Fireworks! Fireworks!
I can see (or "be") the fireworks.
Fireworks! Fireworks!
Shooting way up high.

Chorus

2. We meet our friends
And offer them some nuts and sweets.
The cards we send
Wish all a happy year.

Chorus

Welcome to the New Fully Digital *Pass It On!*

by Hassaun Ali Jones-Bey, Editor

As CMN president Anna Stange relates in her board report in this issue celebrating all of the wonderful people who bring "life and breadth" to CMN, there's a lot of change going on, and the change that you are currently viewing, assuming that you are reading this on your computer, is perhaps best described at the beginning of the "Farewell and Best Wishes" written by our production editor, Caroline Presnell, that tells about the nineteen years of service Jan Graves provided to CMN.

In this brave new world of ever-evolving digital technologies, Jan's consummate skills, talents, and dedication shepherded *PIO!* from the era of paper publishing into an online PDF file format that essentially offered a digital image of the paper layout. But as Caroline writes: "With this issue, the journal becomes a wholly digital publication requiring design and production procedures and skills that overlap with but are somewhat different from those needed for print publications." And with that change, Jan, who was so fabulous that we now need two people to replace her, has moved on to pursue other interests.

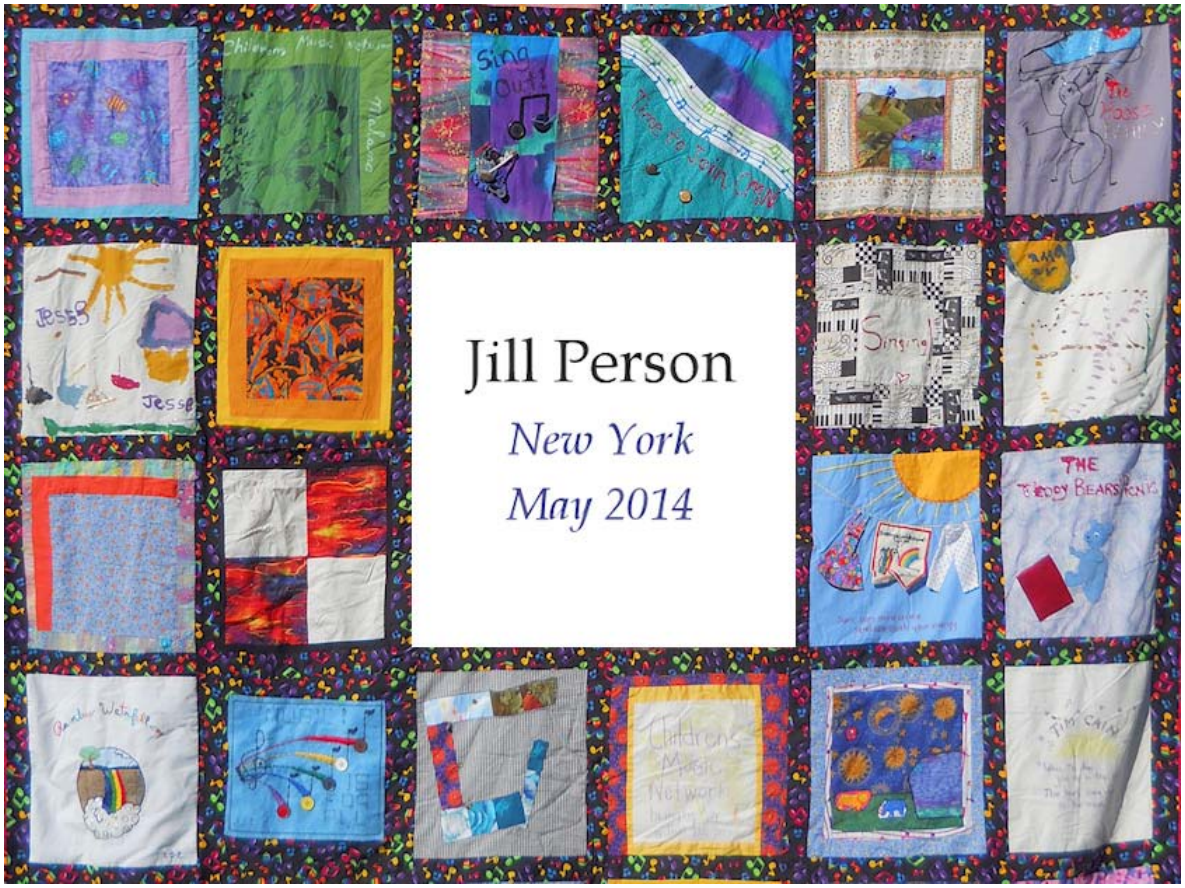
Actually, that's not quite true. One of the two people who are collaborating to put out the new digital *PIO!* is Carl Foote, a daytime computer programmer and a nighttime classical musician who has been CMN's web person since 2002, and who is also integrating the new digital journal into the website that he has managed for well over a decade. "I've benefited in so many ways from being connected to CMN, it's hard to summarize," Carl said. "CMN is a group of music people who face in their lives much of what I face in mine, and I appreciate the example and support and friendship of everyone I meet. I've learned a lot from CMNers. On the day side, CMN and I have grown up on the Internet together; looking back at that 2002 website makes me feel like I'm looking at my junior high yearbook picture. We've come a long way." The other collaborator in this new digital journal is Kim Arden, who Carl describes as a wonderful graphic artist he's worked with on a number of projects, including other musician and nonprofit websites. "While keeping to her own style, she has the ability to create artwork that people can relate to and feel represents them—an uncommon gift," he said.

By moving *PIO!* out of the PDF files and into the pages of the website itself, *PIO!* will become much easier to read: it'll be accessible on your phone, tablet —wherever you wish to read it. You'll also be able to quickly find-and-click to

songs and articles from previous issues. There's an incredible amount of deep and useful information in *PIO!* And we are all working to put it in your hands and at your fingertips. In addition to the *PIO!* itself, membership material throughout the site is being updated. You won't have to go into a special membership area any more in order to read *PIO!*, nor continually remember your log-in and password—the website will be able to remember you from one visit to the next.

Please share the new online *Pass It On!* with someone you think might be interested. Each issue will contain articles that are open to anyone who wishes to read them. You can send people a link that goes directly to the article —"pass it on," as they say. Here's one more way to let people know about CMN.

In Memoriam



New Sounds

compiled by Barbara Rice

Note: These descriptions of new releases are sent in by the CMN members mentioned, but they may have been edited by Pass It On! *staff for style consistency or length. The materials have not been reviewed. In addition to the sources listed, many recordings are available at local independent children's book and record stores.*

STACEY PEASLEY

Lucky Day

Stacey Peasley ventures into her second album inspired by the influences in her own life as a mom to three children. Her evolving pop-rock songwriting style has adapted and grown, much like her family over recent years, paralleling life in the moment. Through this evolution, her music maintains broad appeal with families of all shapes and sizes.

CDs are available at http://www.staceypeasley.com/music.html.

KAREN K & THE JITTERBUGS

Karen Kalafatas

Big Ol' Truck

Karen K & the Jitterbugs play pop-infused, genre-swirling tunes that parents love as much as their kids. On this album, Karen sets the scene with "Bug Out," the imaginary fort in her back yard where she seeks adventures and makes music with her friends the Jitterbugs: Bumble (Seth Connelly, guitar), Stink Bug (Chris Small, drums), Hop (Eric Salt, bass), and sidekick and best friend Lightning Bug (Aaron Jones, everything else).

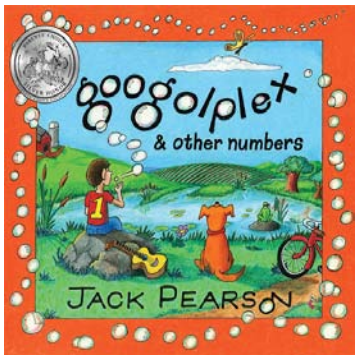
CDs are available at iTunes, Amazon, CD Baby, Sound Cloud, or http://www.karenkjitterbugs.com.

JACK PEARSON

Googolplex & Other Numbers

Jack Pearson's newest CD, *Googolplex & Other Numbers*, is a collection of some classic songs he's known for, including "Tooth Fairy" and "Velcro," as well as the title song and five new songs newly available on this recording. Jack's a writer whose music flows from our American folk traditions, featuring acoustic guitar, banjo, fiddle, mandolin, spoons, jaw harp, and more. Though

aimed at kids ages five to ten, the music has a fun, family feel that will appeal to all ages.



The CD is $15 and is available using PayPal at http://www.jackpearson.org.

ANDRÉS SALGUERO

¡Uno, Dos, Tres Con Andrés!

¡Uno, Dos, Tres Con Andrés! brings to families around the world a bona fide anthology of salsa, bachata, plena, mariachi, vallenato, bolero, champeta, and more, with vocals in both Spanish and English. Andrés' original songs represent a joyous treasure trove of Latin rhythms and instrumental colors highlighted by the talents of world-class artists. Illustrations by Colombian artist Carlos Diaz Consuegra grace the CD's beautiful Spanish/English lyrics booklet and cover.

Now residing in the Washington, D.C., area, Andrés called upon his immigrant experience in the making of *¡Uno, Dos, Tres con Andrés!*, creating songs of friendship and happiness that celebrate cross-cultural sharing. Andrés' music vibrates with the pure beauty of languages and encourages kids not to be shy or afraid of cultural differences, as exemplified by the opening line of the album's first song, "Hola Amigo": "It doesn't matter where you are from, if you speak English or Español. It doesn't matter, there's nothing wrong. We can all get along."

An all-Spanish version of *¡Uno, Dos, Tres con Andrés!* is in the works.

CDs are $8 digital or $10 + S/H for a hard copy, available at http://123andres.bandcamp.com/album/uno-dos-tres-con-andr-s.
For an audio preview, go to http://123andres.com, or watch a YouTube video.

Regional Reports

For information on upcoming activities, read the Regional Events page on the CMN website or subscribe to the CMN *E-News*. For a list of region contact people in the US and Canada, click here.

Great Lakes

The Great Lakes Region CMN sponsored the kids stage at the annual Central Ohio Folk Festival (COFF) held in Batelle Darby Creek Park in Galloway, Ohio, in May. Against the background of a large banner showing the CMN logo, a number of nonmember musicians joined region members Joanie Calem, Sarah Goslee-Reed, and Deborah Van Kleef in making music for and with the children.

Mid-Atlantic

On a beautiful springlike day that was unseasonably warm for Washington, D.C., about a dozen adults and three children gathered at the Southwest Neighborhood Library on February 22, 2014, for a region song swap organized by Devin Walker and Marsha Goodman-Wood. Attendees included not only local members and newcomers, but members from the Philadelphia and Boston areas. Besides the song sharing times, those present took part in making a recording to advertise the CMN annual conference scheduled to take place in nearby Virginia in the fall. The fun and networking continued after the swap ended as some of the group went out to dinner together.

Then on March 9, members convened at the home of David and Jenny Heitler-Klevans in Cheltenham, Pennsylvania (in the Philadelphia area). Attenders enjoyed a potluck dinner and song swap and continued with their planning, as host region, for the CMN conference to be held in September.

The big warm-weather event, held jointly with the New York Metro CMN Region, was a song swap and potluck picnic hosted by Danny and Kim Adlerman in Metuchen, New Jersey, on July 12. It drew CMNers from four or five states. This date being the birthday of Henry David Thoreau, whose views on social issues many CMNers find compatible with theirs, some participants chose song offerings with similar themes.

Midwest

CMNers gathered at the home of Karen Banks Lubicz in Park Ridge, Illinois, for a “jigfest” to dance in the new year on the afternoon of January 12, 2014. Besides a variety of dancing, there was a sleigh ride and pie making. The award for the member who came the farthest went to Mary Jane Guymon from Frankfort, Illinois, who shared stories about rolling pins used as therapeutic tools and working at a special needs school. As usual at these gatherings, everyone probably laughed and talked as much as we sang.

New England

On March 22, the region’s annual all-day gathering was held at the Calvary United Methodist Church in Arlington, Massachusetts. CMN member Steve Roslonek was the keynoter. Attendees could choose from a full program of workshops on topics such as songwriting, approaches to using movement with song, using music for a cause, nature songs, and honoring Pete Seeger’s work. And there were still enough songs in us to conclude the day with a round-robin.

New York Metro

New York Metro members Barbara Girt, Lisa Novemsky, and Nancy Hershatter organized a “Pass It On for Pete” gathering held at the Ethical Society in Maplewood, New Jersey, on May 10. About twenty people participated in two workshops in the morning, then enjoyed a potluck lunch and a song circle dedicated to Pete’s memory in the afternoon.

In May, New York Metro joined with Mid-Atlantic for a picnic and song swap in New Jersey. See the Mid-Atlantic regional report.

In the works is a regional gathering on November 15 at the White Plains library with the theme “Song as Story.” Longtime New England Region CMN member Jackson Gillman will give the featured presentation on using our first instruments—voice and body—in performance.

Northern California

The Reading Bug Bookstore in San Carlos provided space for a CMN gathering on February 16, 2014. Longtime member Nancy Schimmel gave a storytelling presentation that demonstrated how she weaves melody and lyrics into her stories. That was followed by a short round-robin song sharing. Then the group moved into a public mode to give a free concert for a group of families who had been invited by the book store staff. Region members are looking forward to other such collaborations.

Northern California CMNers hosted a lively song swap at the San Francisco Free Folk Festival on June 22. Original songs, a two-part arrangement of "The Strangest Dream," a traditional Shona game song, a draw-and-sing preschool number, and an echo song about a beloved dog were among the varied fare in the swap. The mix of longtime CMN members, newer members, and folks just discovering CMN for the first time made for an energetic and friendly gathering. Co-facilitators Nancy Schimmel and Bonnie Lockhart agreed that the CMN presence at the San Francisco Festival has been growing stronger over the past few years, and we owe a thank you to CMN members Laurie Vega and Dale Boland, the former for beginning these CMN swaps at the festival, and the latter for picking up the torch and continuing to include CMN in the family room line-up.